

**Centre for Native Education
Annual Report 2004-2005**

by Manon Tremblay
Coordinator, Centre for Native Education

June 29, 2005

Foreword

The Centre for Native Education, a division of Support Services, offers services to Concordia University's First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. It also offers services to potential students who are interested in pursuing studies at Concordia University as well as services to all Concordia students, staff and faculty wishing to learn more about the First Peoples of Canada.

Personnel

The Centre for Native Education is staffed by two permanent full-time employees, a coordinator and an office assistant. Student employees are also occasionally hired to handle special projects. As of June 15, 2005, Silvana Novembre, the Centre's office assistant has left on maternity leave, effective until July 31, 2006. Her position has been posted and a replacement will be hired during the course of the summer.

Space

The Centre for Native Education continues to experience difficulties with its allocated space in annex V. As in previous years, the Centre's staff has struggled with freezing room temperatures in winter, and stifling heat in summer. In winter, the temperature rarely rises above 16 degrees Celsius and can sometimes be as low as 12 degrees. During the winter of 2005, the Centre closed a total of six times due to indoor temperatures close to the freezing mark. In summer, ambient temperatures easily reach 28 degrees Celsius in the morning and temperatures as high as 36 degrees by the afternoon are not uncommon. The inability to control ambient room temperatures has forced staff to close the Centre several times per year because of unacceptable working conditions. As a result, students can not fully access the physical services of the Centre.

Since the fall of 2003, we have also been afflicted with an infestation of mice. From October 2003 to April 2005, 21 mice have been caught at the Centre. The mice and the less than ideal temperatures as well as many other issues related to the maintenance of old buildings have been the subject of a considerable amount of time and energy spent in discussions that have lead to very little action. Indeed, the Centre for Native Education has been occupying the same space since 1992 and very little has been done to fix the temperature problem until this year where some action has been taken where the boiler is concerned. Other issues have gone unanswered. Morale of staff and students is considerably affected by these circumstances and drop-in rates are at an all-time low during the coldest months of winter.

Aboriginal students and post-secondary education: trends and issues

In its report entitled *Embracing Differences: Post-Secondary Education among Aboriginal Students, Students with Children and Students with Disabilities* (2005), the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation states that “Aboriginal Peoples represent one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population. The size of the 20 to 24 year-old Aboriginal age group is expected to peak around 2011, placing maximum demands on the post-secondary education system.”

- Population trends

The median age of 24 years for the Aboriginal population of Canada should translate into a high number of university students. But this is not the case. Regardless of the number of young people, only 31% of 20 to 24 year-old and 19% of 25 to 29 year-old Aboriginal individuals were attending school in 2003, compared to 49% and 21% in the Canadian population. Furthermore, the Aboriginal student population in all post-secondary institutions across the country tends to be older. At Concordia, the median age of Aboriginal students is 33 years, a statistic that has remained constant for the last 10 years.

- Perceptions of education system

Aboriginal students face many educational challenges unique to their cultures and histories. Years of oppression and systematic assimilation attempts through an abusive education system has left a legacy of dysfunctionality and a deep distrust of all types of schooling. Intergenerational trauma stemming from residential school experience has lead to a considerable lack of support from family and friends when it comes to educational pursuits. Community members are deeply concerned that further education will alienate the individual and they worry for their welfare because they still perceive the system as abusive. Students often pursue a post-secondary education without encouragement and support from family and friends.

- Social implications of male to female student ratio

There is a disproportionately high number of female students in the Aboriginal student population across Canada. In the last ten years, 75 to 80% of the Aboriginal student population at Concordia has been female. Female students are also much more likely to graduate. This in itself, apart from being a disturbing social trend as concerns Aboriginal males, can be detrimental to graduating students who, wanting to reintegrate their communities and invest their new skills and knowledge, are often ostracized by a male-dominated leadership afraid that the women will bring unwanted change. Aboriginal women who hold university degrees are often passed over for employment in their home communities in favour of people who are clearly unqualified. Attitudes towards educated women eventually force many to leave their home communities to seek employment in major urban centres and make potential students who prefer to stay in the community think twice about their educational pursuits.

- Family responsibilities

Because they are older, Aboriginal students already have family responsibilities. They are mostly single parents with very little or no child support. Delaying children until all educational pursuits are completed is a reality that is foreign to Aboriginal cultures where women traditionally have their first children in their teens. Although fewer women have children so young, the incidence of teenage pregnancy in Aboriginal communities

remains fairly high and is not perceived as a social problem by the community. Also, because of teenage pregnancy, grandmothers can be as young as 30 and often have, at one time or other, custody of one or more grandchild. Family responsibilities translate into less time spent on studying, a higher level of absenteeism in the classroom and, consequently, poorer grades. Therefore, Aboriginal students have difficulty accessing awards, bursaries and scholarships, most of which list academic excellence as a selection criteria. Family responsibilities also limit the amount of time an individual can dedicate to student life activities.

- Culture shock, isolation and homesickness

Many students live in remote areas and must relocate to attend a post-secondary institution. As a result, many leave behind a support system while moving to an urban centre with a culture alien to their own. In this sense, Aboriginal students live the same reality as international students. Isolation, culture shock, homesickness are big factors that impede on academic success. The decision to leave children behind in the care of relatives can also be detrimental to mental health. Students with children back home often end up withdrawing from their programmes.

- Financial aid

Status Indians receive funding through education authorities managed by their band councils or directly through the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). The funding generally covers tuition fees, a monthly allowance and books. Transfer payments to band councils from the Department of Indian Affairs have not increased for over 20 years despite exponential increases in the cost of living and in the pool of potential students. Funding provided by bands or directly through DIAND have created a culture of dependency on prospective students who prefer to shelve any educational pursuits if they are not sponsored. Thousands of potential students are either left without financial means to go to school or choose not to, for political reasons, unless they are funded.

Since most students are older and have children of their own, they can not rely on family for additional financial support. In fact, they are sometimes providing dependent care to their parents or to other members of their families.

- Educational background

Many Native students lack the educational requirements necessary to start university. As a result, most are mature students with no CEGEP education who have been out of school for many years. Lack of prerequisites reduces access to programmes and tend to discourage students who have to take many additional credits in order to qualify. In addition, many students who were schooled on reserve often have, by Canadian standards, a substandard education that puts them at a clear disadvantage.

- Language barriers

Many students from northern communities are not fluent in French or English. Although they can generally keep up with classroom discussions, their ability to write in either language is very limited despite getting all of their education in one of the official languages.

- Alienation

In most universities, there are few courses that touch on Native issues. The absence of relevant and culturally sensitive curricula contributes to alienation and a feeling of unimportance in Canadian society. Those few courses that are available are largely taught by non-Aboriginal scholars with a decidedly eurocentric perspective. Students often express anger and disappointment at being subjected to a predominantly White worldview on their cultures.

Class size as well as teaching format – foreign to traditional Aboriginal ways of learning and teaching – are intimidating to many Aboriginal students. Deeply ingrained cultural cues pertaining to dialogue and expression often clash with Canadian ways of interacting and prevent Aboriginal students from fully participating in classroom discussions. This lack of participation can be misconstrued by professors and peers.

Most universities only employ a handful of Aboriginal people, if at all. As a result, Native students have very few mentors or role models within the university that they can look up to for guidance.

Although many universities across Canada offer services tailored to the specific needs of Aboriginal students, most stop short of meeting their most pressing needs either because of constrained financial and human resources or because of limited mandates. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) found that most universities and colleges in Canada fall under an assimilative model, expecting all students to fall in line and to fit within an established pattern of study programmes and services. It found that most universities were willing to be integrative and to respond to the specific needs of Aboriginal students but only to a certain point.

- Aboriginal students with disabilities

Aboriginal students with disabilities face additional barriers. Band councils and DIAND are having a hard time grasping the concept of a reduced course load for students with disabilities and will not fund what they consider to be part-time students. As well, education authorities and DIAND will not always defray the cost of testing for learning disabilities, therefore depriving students from getting the help they need to succeed in school.

Aboriginal students with mobility impairments who manage to overcome this financial hurdle are faced with another when choosing Concordia : the inaccessibility of the Centre for Native Education, a major barrier that contributes to feelings of isolation. Aboriginal student services centres are not only service points, they are also community bases where students can connect with members of their own culture. This is denied to students with mobility impairments.

Services

The following are the services offered by the Centre for Native Education:

- Academic advising and referral

The Centre provides academic advising for potential students who have clear ideas about their career path but are not quite sure which programme of study they need to reach their goals. We advise registered students as to course selection and refer them to departmental advisors. We also advise students who are experiencing academic difficulty on the options and courses of action that are opened to them in order to continue with their studies and refer to appropriate services at Concordia. We help returning students gain readmission after failing their programmes. Finally, we encourage successful students to pursue graduate studies and help them choose appropriate programmes.

- Advocacy

The Centre for Native Education helps students who are experiencing trouble with registration, Quebec residency requirements, unpaid fees, and all other matters related to being a student in good standing. We also advocate on behalf of students who are encountering difficulties in the classroom in matters unrelated to their academic performance such as real or perceived discrimination or racism, and conflicts of interest or personality. The Centre is in regular contact with faculty and staff in many departments to negotiate late completion of papers, and alternate ways of grading which are mutually acceptable to all parties.

The Centre is also very active in helping new students establish their files with their respective band councils and education authorities to ensure regular and speedy funding. We make sure that all the necessary paperwork is completed and sent to Student Accounts in a timely fashion. We advocate on behalf of students when their sponsorship is jeopardized either through bureaucratic mistakes or because of a change in academic standing.

Operating with the firm belief that education is a holistic undertaking and that academic success can be influenced by a number of socio-economic factors, the Centre for Native Education also helps students who are experiencing difficulties getting established in Montreal. We help students identify suitable lodgings, we refer them to the appropriate services when landlord-tenant disputes arise, we help them find schools and daycares for their children, and we help them find the goods and services they need to live in Montreal.

- Counselling services

Although counselling services are offered at Concordia University through Counselling and Development, Aboriginal students have shown considerable resistance to using these services. This reflects a general trend, identified in scientific literature, on the low use of counselling services by all cultural minorities. Native students will simply not consult a counsellor or a psychotherapist who is not from their own cultural background as they are convinced that a lack of awareness of and sensitivity to the unique history of Aboriginal Peoples is detrimental to a good rapport between the counsellor and the client. Furthermore, traditional eurocentric counselling methods as well as the need to schedule appointments and put time constraints on sessions run counter to the Aboriginal person's cultural self leading to a lack of comfort and further feelings of alienation.

For the past two years, the Centre has offered students in need counselling services through an accredited member of the Order of Social Workers. Although most students acknowledge that this is an essential service, response to the presence of an Aboriginal counsellor and use of counselling services has been practically non-existent. Underlying reasons and issues pertaining to the underutilisation of services are currently being assessed.

- Information on scholarships, awards and bursaries

The Centre provides information on the various scholarships, awards and bursaries offered to Native students as well as all other awards that they qualify for. We strongly encourage all qualified students to apply and we help them complete application forms.

- Agenda and Handbook for Aboriginal students

Every year the Centre produces and distributes to its constituency the Aboriginal Student Handbook and Agenda, a booklet that contains information on the services we offer as well as other essential services at Concordia and in Montreal. The Agenda also provides students with important telephone numbers and academic deadlines.

- Computer facilities

The Centre for Native Education has a small computer lab for the benefit of Concordia's Aboriginal students. It is composed of four computers and one printer. The computers are in very high use as many of our students do not own computers at home. Computers are used mainly for writing papers, conducting research, registration and accessing student information.

- Documentation centre

The Centre for Native Education has a small collection of books on issues and subjects pertaining to the First Peoples of the Americas. It has always been widely used by all Concordia students. During the 2004-2005 academic year, special grants obtained by the Aboriginal Student Association from the Concordia Council on Student Life as well as additional funds from the Ministère de l'Éducation and book donations from the Native Friendship Centre of Montreal, have allowed the Centre to expand and improve its documentation centre into a reading room of considerable size. This new reading room will be inaugurated during orientation activities that are held in September of every academic year. All Concordia students, staff and faculty as well as researchers from other institutions are welcomed to consult our books. The reading room has a no lending policy.

- Group and individual study space

The Centre provides a quiet, friendly and safe space where students can catch up on their readings, do their homework and meet fellow students who are registered in the same

classes. The Centre is also a good place for students who wish to work with tutors in a quiet space on campus.

- Kitchen facilities

The Centre for Native Education's kitchen is outfitted with a refrigerator, a microwave oven, a coffeemaker, a kettle, a toaster, dishes and utensils. Students know that they can store their lunch in the refrigerator while they attend classes. Students can always count on free coffee and tea as well as the occasional treat brought in by staff and other students.

- Newsletter

The Centre produces a newsletter that contains information on student life, Concordia services, important deadlines, awards and scholarships, job opportunities and events of interest to Native students. The newsletter is sent to all Aboriginal students on a regular basis, with a special four-page issue at the beginning of the academic year. The newsletter's main goal is to reach out to students who do not use the Centre's services on a regular basis and provide necessary information.

- Student lounge

The student lounge is the place to meet with other Native students, socialize, take a break in between classes and even take an occasional nap. The Centre for Native Education subscribes to a variety of Aboriginal newspapers and magazines to keep students informed on what is happening in their home communities. The student lounge is a high traffic area much appreciated by our students who often feel isolated in Montreal and need to connect with other Native people. It is very often the place where students meet other students in the same field of study and where study groups start forming, a definite advantage to all involved.

- Telephone, fax machine and photocopier

Students who visit the Centre have access to a fax machine, a photocopier and a telephone, all of which are very much in use by students. Students continue to enjoy the

convenience of sending and receiving faxes from their education authorities; making copies without standing in long lineups; and placing confidential calls in a quiet and comfortable environment. In emergency situations, students can also access our long-distance telephone service to call home or to talk to their funding agencies.

Student population

During the 2004-2005 academic year, there were 137 Aboriginal students attending Concordia. This number is by no means definite and only represents those students that the Centre for Native Education has identified either through direct contact with the student, their band councils or through the Student Accounts Office. This number includes all Status Indians and all registered Inuit but does not necessarily include all non-Status or Métis students since there is no means of knowing them unless they self-identify. Therefore, there are likely more unidentified Aboriginal students at Concordia.

Trends in the Aboriginal student population at Concordia are staying the course with 70% of students being female. The average age of the student population also remains steady at 31 years, a slight decrease from the previous academic year's average of 33 years. Also, the majority of Native students are enrolled in undergraduate programmes with the faculty of Arts and Science.

Of the 137 Aboriginal students, 63 are Mohawk and hail from the communities of Kahnawake, Kahnesatake and Akwesasne, 23 are Cree from Northern Quebec, 7 are Inuit and 6 are Micmac. The remaining 38 students come from a variety of First Nations across Canada, the United States and even South America. In all, 21 nations are represented at Concordia.

Unfortunately, the 2004-2005 academic year has registered another decrease in the Aboriginal student population. After several years of increase, the Aboriginal student

population reached a plateau in 1999-2000 and has been decreasing ever since as can be seen below¹:

1995-96	155 students
1996-97	188 students
1997-98	192 students
1998-99	188 students
1999-2000	193 students
2000-2001	181 students
2001-02	165 students
2002-03	144 students
2003-04	150 students
2004-05	137 students

It is clear from these numbers that a strategy must be planned and implemented in order to reverse the trend and reestablish a strong Aboriginal presence on campus. There is an urgent need to promote post-secondary education to younger individuals as well as a need to help Native people access post-secondary education and to implement programmes that will ensure success.

Student association

During the 2004-2005 academic year, attempts at resuscitate the Aboriginal Student Association met with mitigated success. Although students showed initial interest in the Association, an executive still has not been elected and tasks and responsibilities often fell to the same student. Nevertheless, the Aboriginal Student Association was able to coordinate two highly successful events. The first was submitting a proposal and receiving funds for the creation of our new reading room as already mentioned above. The second was organizing a lecture by the producers of the documentary “The Mushau

¹ Please take note that these numbers may not concord with numbers in previous reports. As students are identified, previous years' student lists are also amended.

Innu : Surviving Canada” in collaboration with the Centre for Native Education and the Concordia Student Union. The lecture was held on March 14, 2005 and attracted 100 people.

Special activities

In 2002-2003, the Ministère de l’Éducation allocated funds to the Centre for Native Education as part of a special government programme to aid Aboriginal students adapt to university life. An amount of \$173 000 was allocated over a period of five years. In 2004-2005, the Centre received a sum of \$45 000. These funds have allowed us to bring some physical improvement to the Centre for Native Education such as the new reading room mentioned above. They have also allowed us to engage in special activities that would normally be impossible because of budgetary constraints. One of these activities is attending the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education which will be held in New Zealand in November 2005. Enough funds have been secured to allow 4 students to accompany the Coordinator of the Centre for Native Education. Selection of students is currently underway.

- Lectures

The Coordinator of the Centre for Native Education is often invited to give guest lectures on a variety of topics pertaining to the First Nations of Canada. Lectures given this year include the following:

November 9, 2004
RELI 378 Death and Dying
Prof. Donald Boisvert
Topic : Beliefs and Rituals of the Plains Cree

February 4, 2005

Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, Peer Support Group

Topic: The Aboriginal student

February 10, 2005

RELI 378 Death and Dying

Prof. Donald Boisvert

Topic : Beliefs and Rituals of the Plains Cree

February 24, 2005

Quebec Native Women Association Conference

Topic : Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education

May 12, 2005

CEGEP Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu

Topic : The First Nations of Canada

May 27, 2005

Armed Forces Recruitment Centre

Topic : The First Nations of Canada

June 6, 2005

RELI 378 Death and Dying

Prof. Deidre Butler

Topic : Beliefs and Rituals of the Plains Cree

June 7, 2005

EDUC 230 Introduction to the Philosophy of Education

Prof. Sheila Sullivan

Topic : Residential schools

Committees

- The First Peoples Studies Programme

In December 2000, the Centre for Native Education approached a number of interested faculty members to explore the possibility of creating a First Peoples Studies programme. After meeting with then vice-dean, curriculum Robert Kilgour and Dean Martin Singer of the Faculty of Arts and Science, a committee was struck to create a new Major, explore budget implications and write a proposal. The project is now 5 years old, and has recently been approved by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences curriculum committee. It will be on the agenda for approval at Faculty Council in the fall of 2005 and it is hoped that it will be tabled at Senate and Board of Governors during the 2005-2006 academic year. The Centre for Native Education has, from the beginning, taken an active role in the creation of this programme which has lead to an unprecedented collaboration between a service sector and an academic unit. The programme is garnering much praise and support from Native communities and many scholars. It is hoped that it can be implemented by the 2007-2008 academic year. The following is the introductory memo to the proposal as submitted to the Faculty of Arts and Science:

The School of Community and Public Affairs, in collaboration with the Centre for Native Education, is proud to propose a new 42-credit undergraduate Major in First Peoples Studies. In 1992, Concordia University demonstrated innovative leadership by establishing the Centre for Native Education, offering Aboriginal students greater access to higher education, as well as fostering dialogue across cultures. The proposed new undergraduate programme in First Peoples Studies consolidates Concordia's leadership in the area, and builds on a solid base of accomplishments and strong relationships with its milieu. The proposed program is a testament to Concordia's responsiveness to its milieu and to its forward-looking mission. No other comparable programme in the discipline of First Peoples Studies exists in Québec. The need for such a programme has been repeatedly raised within intercultural dialogue fostered by Concordia over the past decade among students, staff, professors and people of the wider community. Various Aboriginal

leaders in Québec enthusiastically support Concordia in establishing the proposed programme, responding to a vital need within the present and a vision for the future.

The proposed new Major programme in First Peoples Studies strives to:

- bring increasing awareness and understanding of First Peoples issues to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in an academic setting;
- create a knowledge base for respectful academic research on First Peoples issues;
- meet the need for First Peoples perspectives in post-secondary education;
- develop further understanding of the wider society's standing in relation to First Peoples;
- facilitate the development of conceptual and practical skills relevant to the strengthening of First Peoples;
- promote the integration of members of the First Peoples into post-secondary education;
- contribute to the empowerment of First Peoples;
- build bridges toward mutual understanding between Québec society and First Peoples.

The new programme draws on the now well-recognized strengths of the academic discipline of First Peoples Studies and importantly on existing relationships between Concordia and several Aboriginal nations and communities in Québec. Although the programme seeks to expose students to the broad cultural and social diversity of all First Peoples in Québec, there is a special initial focus on the particular experiences of the Eeyouch (Cree), Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) and Inuit peoples, with whom Concordia has built privileged links over the years. This focus clearly distinguishes the proposed programme from those in First Peoples or Native Studies offered by other Canadian universities.

The programme is unique in several ways. For example, although sharing the same Cree heritage, the Eeyouch of Québec are culturally and linguistically distinct from the other Cree groups in the rest of Canada. By focusing on the Eeyouch, Concordia's programme

opens a different window on the Cree experience than do other Native Studies programmes in Canada, enabling an important appreciation of the diversity of Cree experience. Similarly, the Inuit of Québec and the Kanien'kehaka tend not to be as extensively addressed in other programmes. As the first and only programme in First Peoples Studies offered in a Québec university, this new Major will also contribute significantly to educating the general Québec population about First Peoples' experiences, thus contributing in a sustained and informed manner to needed, ongoing dialogue between these two populations. As well, the programme is pedagogically conceived to offer students a comprehensive view of the past, present and future of First Peoples in carefully structured, logical stages of learning.

The proposed new programme in First Peoples Studies targets the broadest audience possible. Although one anticipates that Aboriginal students of Quebec, both on reserve and in urban areas, will enroll in the new programme, the experience of other Canadian universities tells us that significant numbers of non-Aboriginal students will also be interested in taking the programme.

Students enrolling in the 42-credit Major programme in First Peoples Studies are encouraged, though not required to take either minor in another area of study, or a second major. In this way, they may widen both the breadth of their learning and the ways that they may contribute to the advancement of First Peoples issues. Students who stand to benefit from a Major programme in First Peoples Studies at Concordia include:

- First Peoples who wish to further their knowledge of their own cultures, languages, histories, politics and contemporary issues, as well as to acquire a better understanding of government policies that continue to affect First Peoples;
- First Peoples who were adopted into non-Native families as infants, or raised within an urban area isolated from their communities, and who wish to reconnect with their roots. This includes a very significant part of First Peoples in Canada.;

- students who, because of renewed interest in First Peoples cultures over the past several decades, wish to further their understanding of the cultural diversity of First Peoples;
- students who, upon graduation, plan to work with First Peoples and their communities;
- students of political science, history, sociology, anthropology, education, linguistics, economics, and so on, who have an interest in furthering their knowledge of First Peoples issues;
- students who wish to gain greater understanding of First Peoples' contemporary social and political issues;
- students who would plan to use the Major in First Peoples Studies in preparation for graduate degrees in the discipline of First Peoples Studies in other universities.

At present, no undergraduate major in First Peoples Studies exists in any Québec post-secondary institution. This is a void that Concordia University is favourably positioned to fill, as an institution known for its spirit of innovation and responsiveness to its milieu. Concordia's leadership in establishing the first undergraduate major in First Peoples Studies in Québec is a proud expression of its unique mission.

- National Aboriginal Student Services Association

Apart from the committee overseeing the First Peoples Studies programme, the Centre also takes part in other committees. In 2002, the National Aboriginal Student Services Association (NASSA), a division of CACUSS, was founded. The Centre has been a member from the beginning and continues to take an active role. At the moment, Manon Tremblay is the regional representative for the province of Quebec.

NASSA generally meets twice a year. The first meeting is held during the CACUSS conference and the other is held later in the year at a predetermined site. During the 2004-2005 academic year, NASSA held its meeting at Concordia where 21 Aboriginal student services providers gathered to discuss new business arising. The meeting was declared a success and many positive feedbacks were received by all participants.

- Retention pilot project committee

During the 2004-2005 academic year, a committee was struck to oversee a pilot project on issues pertaining to retention. This committee, chaired by Terry Too, was composed of student services providers from various departments. It focused on the retention rates of students taking programmes Sociology and Anthropology, particularly the reasons that compel successful students to abandon their studies at Concordia. A final report was prepared by Christine Jourdan, Chair of the Sociology and Anthropology department, outlining findings and recommendations.

Goals and Objectives for 2005-2006

An issue that needs to be immediately addressed is the decrease in the numbers of Aboriginal students. Effective strategies need to be developed in collaboration with appropriate departments in order to increase the Aboriginal presence on campus. As well, in order to make students feel less alienated and more at home at Concordia, the profile of the Centre for Native Education and Aboriginal peoples needs to be raised through a regular programme of special activities designed to attract positive attention to the Centre and its constituency. In the upcoming academic year, the Centre will look into how to best serve these interests. The Centre will also continue to be actively involved in bringing about the Major in First Peoples Studies to Concordia. As the project gathers strength and support, the goal for 2005-2006 is to put maximum energy into furthering its implementation. Finally, if Concordia is to compete with other universities to get its fair share of the Aboriginal market, the Centre for Native Education's services must be brought in line with the services offered by other universities. Current services need to be assessed and new services must be considered to meet the needs of Aboriginal students. In order to do, the Centre will resume the process of conducting a future needs assessment started during the Winter 2005 semester. The Centre for Native Education is looking forward to the 2005-2006 academic year as a year of positive change and growth as well as exciting new ventures.